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Containing a lecture given at the Library of Congress by a book collector specializing in the works of the eighteenth century printer John Baskerville, this pamphlet describes the personal rewards and public benefits of book collecting. The lecture first discusses the "true collector," collecting books printed by John Baskerville, and collecting American book auction catalogs. It then examines three factors involved in the growth of book collections: extension, opportunity, and rationalization. In addition, the lecture describes the role of the collector in preserving books, in the development of significant book collections, and in the scholarly use of materials. (EL)

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Book Collecting:

Personal Rewards

AND

Public Benefits

A lecture delivered at the Library of Congress on December 7, 1983

by William P. Barlow, Jr.

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PREFACE

THE CENTER FOR THE BOOK in the Library of Congress, which sponsored William P. Barlow, Jr.'s lecture on book collecting, was created by Act of Congress in 1977 to stimulate public interest in books, reading, and the written word. The history of books, reading promotion, and the role of books in contemporary society are its three major interests. An informal, voluntary organization funded primarily by private contributions, the Center for the Book brings together members of the book, educational, and business communities for projects and symposia. Drawing on the collections and specialists of the Library of Congress, it also sponsors publications, exhibitions, and events that enhance books and reading in our society.

The Engelhard Lectures on the Book, supported with funds contributed by Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard, consist of public talks that consider books in their many roles—as physical objects, as exemplars of the graphic and typographic arts, as a collecting field, as transmitters of ideas, and as influences on society. William Barlow's talk, the ninth in the series, is the first one to deal directly with book collecting. It was presented at the Library of Congress on December 7, 1983.

Mr. Barlow is a certified public accountant who has his own firm in Oakland, California. As a collector he specializes in the eighteenth-century English printer John Baskerville. He also has one of the largest and most significant collections of book auction catalogs in private hands. Drawing on his own collecting experiences, Mr. Barlow succinctly describes his personal motivations and

pleasures; he also pinpoints some of the major benefits to scholarship of private collecting. It is a pleasure to present his observations to a wider audience and to acknowledge the support of Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard in making this series possible.

JOHN Y. COLE
Executive Director
The Center for the Book

BOOK COLLECTING:
Personal Rewards and Public Benefits

JUST OVER thirty years ago, I bought my first collectible book. It was the edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd* printed by John Baskerville in 1758, and it not only started my book collection but has shaped it ever since.

I am not the first collector to present an Engelhard lecture; everyone who has preceded me has been a collector of books. But my predecessors have discussed the book as a physical object or as an object useful for the transmission or preservation of information. I will discuss the book as a collectible object.

To some this may seem a trivial subject. To others it may seem a subject somewhat removed from the announced purposes of the Center for the Book. To me it is, above all, a subject that is very difficult to present. I hope that before I have concluded it will be evident that book collecting is neither trivial nor outside the purposes of the center. But I think I should explain why it is such a difficult subject for me—if only in self-defense.

There is a species of book generally classified by antiquarian book dealers under the heading "books about books," which is supposed to be distinct from a related classification called "bibliography," although the distinguishing characteristics are not always clear. The species includes reminiscences of book dealers and book collectors, collections of essays allegedly of interest to book collectors, instructions intended to enhance a book collector's fun or profit, and books designed to encourage noncollectors to collect.

Although described as "books about books," these are really "books about book collecting." I am always amazed that so many of these books are published and even more amazed that they are sold. But the most astonishing thing is that they are written! The collecting experience, it has always seemed to me, is so personal that it is both painful to write about and impossible to communicate.

Nevertheless that is what I have been asked to do, and I am going to do it in the same manner most "books about books" are written: I will describe my own experiences as a book collector and hope that something universal may emerge.

As I said earlier, my collecting began with the purchase of a set of Baskerville's Milton just over thirty years ago. Although it is true that this was the first collectible book I purchased, it did not cause my collecting. It can more accurately be described as the catalyst which exposed my latent collecting instincts and at the same time established the nucleus of my personal collection.

I am a firm believer in the principle that book collectors are, first of all, collectors and, secondly, collectors of books. A person who simply accumulates—or feels compelled to accumulate—rare and unusual objects is not a true collector, although this compulsion is invariably present in the collector.

Some years ago this library's greatest benefactor, Lessing Rosenwald, wrote that "true collectors . . . are only those who purchase articles because they are vitally interested in them and wish to know as much as possible about them." This is also a compulsion, and it is also present in the collector. But the mere desire for knowledge is not enough either, for the scholar has this desire and finds the institutional ownership of the objects he wishes to study perfectly satisfactory. The rare book dealer has the same thirst, but he is satisfied with temporary ownership of a book and the application of his knowledge to enhance

its value and to see that it is properly placed.

It is a combination of the urge for acquisition and possession and the passion for knowledge that makes the true collector. And although Mr. Rosenwald stressed the latter and disparaged the former, his next sentence reveals that he knew the truth: "The knowledge about the items they assemble is as important to them as is the ownership." "*As* important," not "*more* important." That is the true collector.

Now that I have elevated my purchase of a set of Baskerville's Milton to the level of a psychological necessity and a scholarly imperative, let me explain what really happened.

I have always been interested in writing—not reading, mind you, just writing. In fact, my guiding principle has been that reading is destructive of one's personal style of writing. As a result, I became a journalist. At age eleven, I published my first newspaper in a single handwritten copy. Two years later I was given a mimeograph machine and published a series of newspapers for ever-expanding audiences. Finally, at age sixteen, I purchased my first printing press: a five-by-eight Kelsey. I was a printer.

After two years of printing the stationery and business cards that the Kelsey Company's advertisements promised would make my fortune and the first few signatures of a book on an international language a friend and I were constructing, my parents belatedly presented me with a book entitled *Graphic Arts Procedures*.

A few pages in this volume described some important typefaces and their designers, including John Baskerville, the eighteenth-century Birmingham gravestone-cutter and japanner turned printer. A few months later, while in Pasadena for my freshman year of college, I saw a set of Baskerville's Milton and bought it. I think you can readily see the inevitability of it all.

Over the next few months I acquired a few examples

of the fine printing of Bruce Rogers, books from the Merrymount, Kelmscott, and Grabhorn Presses, an Elzevier, an Aldine, an Estienne, and a dozen incunabula leaves. This was an accumulation. It might even have been considered a working library for a would-be printer. It was not a collection.

Then I became interested in Baskerville. There is no good reason that I should have become more interested in Baskerville than in any other printer among my "examples." A not-so-good reason, however, is stubbornness. My first collectible book was a Baskerville, and yet when, within a year after I started collecting, a fine collection of Baskervilles came up at Parke-Bernet for auction, through inexperience I failed to get even one of them. To disappointment was added insult. I can still remember telling a Los Angeles book dealer that I was collecting Baskerville and hearing him reply, "Well, you'll grow out of it."

Well, I haven't grown out of it yet, and I don't imagine I will. After thirty years of collecting, I like to think—optimistically—that my collection is at its midpoint. My current acquisitions might not seem to support my contention that I am a "Baskerville collector," but that is how I generally describe myself. There are several reasons for this. Most are pragmatic, but the essential reason is that I can see the relationship between what I am now collecting and Baskerville. And it is such relationships that explain how a collection grows and develops.

Since I have spent thirty years collecting the output of a printer who produced only about fifty items, book dealers are inclined to think I already own everything. That is not so. Most Baskervilles were produced for the collectors' market, and these—the quarto and duodecimo classics, the Miltons, Congreve and Shaftsbury, the Bibles and Prayer Books—are common enough. I have all of them, but not always enough of any of them. Years ago, for example, I decided that I should acquire a copy of

Baskerville's first book, the 1757 Virgil, every year. For a while I managed this, but now I am down to about half a Virgil a year. (I would hasten to say, that is *not* the way I buy them.) I collect duplicates, although with Baskerville there are rarely two precisely identical copies.

About a dozen of the books Baskerville printed—or allowed to be printed in his shop—were produced for the local market in Birmingham. These are uniformly scarce, and I will consider myself lucky if ultimately I have a chance to acquire them all.

There is no way of predicting where a desirable duplicate or a rare minor piece might turn up, and my only recourse is to try to make my name synonymous with Baskerville in the minds of booksellers all over the world.

It is helpful, however, to be identified with a collection that is pretty well complete rather than with a new collecting interest. As a book collector with a limited budget, I could hardly afford to announce simultaneously to a few dozen book dealers that I am now—shall we say—a Kelmscott collector. I would be inundated with offers and would have to refuse most of them for no better reason than a lack of funds.

I find it best to avoid too much publicity about a new area of collecting until the basic books are in place. I can and do now say, for example, that I collect American book auction catalogs without worrying about being overwhelmed with material I do not already have.

This brings me back to the development of my collection. An accumulation of American book auction catalogs would appear to have very little to do with Baskerville, but the trail which led me into this collection still seems a not illogical route. It is not well traveled—this is all the better for an impecunious collector—and it is far from a direct route. In fact, it is not a single path at all but a network of trails leading out from and back to a central core.

It would be very difficult to pinpoint either the time

when or the reasons why John Baskerville became my central collecting interest. I have already suggested that stubbornness played a part. Certainly the fact that Baskerville was English and most material about him is in English was a significant factor. His status as a quasi-amateur was also appealing, and I found the fact that he published relatively few books an attractive consideration.

As I learned more about Baskerville's books I also became intrigued by the complex bibliographical problems they presented. Baskerville's books have an abundance of canceled leaves and signatures, stop-press corrections, and even corrections accomplished by scraping out letters with a knife blade and then stamping in letters with inked pieces of type. There are still unsolved bibliographical puzzles such as the date of the forgery of the 1757 Virgil and the question of who was responsible for it or the mixture of three different varieties of paper in the 1762 duodecimo Horace.

As I learned more about Baskerville's life, I became intrigued with the mixture of fact, error, and gossip that passed for his biography. I was fascinated by his eccentricities, which ranged from flamboyant clothing and carriages in life to unorthodox peregrinations in death.

To satisfy my interest in Baskerville, a run of the books, even if complete, that consisted of a single copy of each edition would hardly be adequate. Because of my bibliographical interest, I needed to acquire multiple copies, not only to provide a copy of each known state but to search for unknown states. To pursue my interest in Baskerville's life, I needed books referring to Baskerville. Since Baskerville's influence on printing seemed important, I could add to my collection books printed by contemporaries who either followed or ignored him. Baskerville's type was sold from time to time to others, and for this reason almost anything printed in the Birmingham area in the eighteenth century could prove to be partly in

his type, or, if not, could provide a picture of provincial printing before or after Baskerville came along. Baskerville's punches and printing equipment went to France after his death, where they were used to print the Kehl edition of Voltaire and afterward floated around Paris during the Revolution. Thus, a number of French books, including endless unidentified revolutionary pamphlets and newspapers, are Baskerville items.

Baskerville's life cannot be easily isolated from contemporary Birmingham history; so Birmingham guidebooks, histories, newspapers, maps, and memoirs are all collectible items. Then there are the London newspapers with notices of Baskerville's books, the periodicals that may have reviewed them, contemporary manuscript journals of visits to the Midlands, and on and on.

These are the obvious extensions and still a long way from American book auction catalogs. My collection of auction catalogs developed through a combination of two of the three factors which, in my view, are involved in the growth of book collections. The first of these is *extension*, and the second is *opportunity*.

Not long after I had begun to acquire multiple copies of Baskerville's books, I became interested in the previous ownership of various volumes as evidenced by bookplates, ownership marks, or bindings. This history of previous ownership is known as provenance and is one of the most fascinating studies in book collecting. Many books, of course, either show no obvious evidence of their provenance at all or contain only an incomplete record. With Baskerville's books, however, few copies are entirely identical in binding and similar identifying characteristics. Depending on the completeness of an auction or book dealer's description, a substantial percentage of the individual copies of a book can be identified in such descriptions. To trace sales of individual copies, I began collecting auction and book dealers' catalogs that listed Baskervilles

in them. This is another example of the extension of a book collection, even though it is a less obvious extension than those mentioned earlier.

Aside from sales of major Baskerville collections—and there have been few of these over the years—it is not easy to identify and purchase only catalogs with Baskerville entries. Few dealers are anxious to have a collector reading through stacks of catalogs to select a small pile of them and fewer still are likely to read the catalogs themselves so as to make offers. This was particularly true when the going price for catalogs was around ten cents. Since I also found it more convenient to read the catalogs at my own leisure and not while in a dealer's shop, I decided to collect all the catalogs I could without regard to whether they were known to include Baskerville books. Naturally my priorities were for catalogs that were most likely to produce Baskerville entries. Clearly this would rule out catalogs before 1757, when Baskerville issued his first book. Statistically, this policy would play down American catalogs before the twentieth century and most Continental catalogs and favor English catalogs.

A number of years ago when I gave a talk on collecting catalogs, I was able to state that I was much less interested in American catalogs than English, but since then both extension and opportunity have changed my priorities. About fifteen years ago, I came across a book dealer with a huge accumulation of American auction catalogs, and the opportunity to achieve virtual completion in such auction houses as Parke-Bernet and the American Art Association-Anderson Galleries was impossible to reject. Just three years ago another similar opportunity came up and allowed me to substantially augment my collection to include virtually all American auction catalogs back to about 1890. Even though these catalogs may produce few additions to my 7,000-card file of Baskerville entries, the opportunity was tempting and the urge for extension of

an accumulation, which had taken on the status of a collection in its own right, made the purchase irresistible. The result is a collection of American book auction catalogs that is almost certainly the largest in private hands and may compete with the few substantial institutional collections. Of course, I have also long since breached my restrictions on catalogs before 1757 and Continental catalogs.

Another area of my collecting illustrates not only the principles of extension and opportunity but also a third factor in collection growth. My interest in the bibliographical aspects of Baskerville's books has led me to a general interest in bibliography and the history of printing. As I acquired multiple copies of books and took up the challenge of variants yet to be discovered, I became interested in that most remarkable piece of bibliographical equipment, the Hinman Collator.

The Hinman Collator is a device that compares two purportedly identical copies of a book using a combination of regular mirrors, 50 percent mirrors, and binoculars to superimpose the images of the two books so that two pages of print appear as one. By flashing the lights that illuminate the pages, the operator alternately views one page and then the other. As he does, any differences in the two pages show up as a kind of movement or flashing on the page. For example, if one copy has a period where the second copy has none, the period will seem to appear and disappear as the lights alternate, thus making even the smallest differences, such as spacing or broken type, obvious.

The only Hinman Collator in Northern California stood in the rare book room of the University of California at Davis. More recently Davis has become known for another bibliographical machine in pioneering the use of a nuclear particle accelerator to perform nondestructive analyses of the paper and inks in early books. Although, unlike the

cyclotron, the Hinman Collator at Davis has remained largely unused, it did provide me with the name of its manufacturer.

A letter of inquiry resulted in a telephone call from Arthur M. Johnson, the engineer who made the machine. When he told me what a Hinman Collator cost, my interest must have audibly waned, because he almost immediately followed this by saying, "*but*, we have a used machine we can let you have at about half that price." I could not help but wonder where a used machine might have come from. "From the Folger Library," he replied.

The "used machine" was the original collator used by its developer, Charlton Hinman, to compare the Folger's many copies of the Shakespeare folios. Once again—opportunity. I bought it, of course.

A few years later, one of my favorite booksellers showed me a book, not even expecting me to be interested in buying it. Some of the best books I have bought have been "shown" to me rather than offered for sale. This was a fine copy of *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis* by Johann Tritheim, 1494, generally regarded as the first printed bibliography. It was a perfect cornerstone of a collection representing the history of bibliography. Since I already had another cornerstone, and a unique one at that, in the original model of the Hinman Collator, I immediately decided I was a collector of the history and development of bibliography.

This acquisition was beyond expansion, since I could not directly tie the Tritheim to Baskerville. It clearly represented opportunity, but even more than that, it represented what I regard as the third significant factor in the growth of my collection: *rationalization*. There is hardly any book so far off subject from my collection that, if I want it, I cannot somehow justify its inclusion. Indeed, in the final analysis, book collecting is the triumph of rationalization over reason.

But if book collecting were merely self-indulgent, I could not meet the obligation, set out at the beginning, to show that it is neither trivial nor beneath the high purposes of the Center for the Book.

The first line of defense against these charges—if I may be forgiven for raising my own charges to defend against—is that book collecting preserves books. It would be difficult for me to use that argument as an excuse for collecting Baskerville Press books or early bibliography. Certainly these books would be preserved by someone else if I failed to provide them protection. Indeed, the argument could easily be made that better protection is available at my local university library, not to mention the fact that there the books would be more readily available to the scholars who might wish to consult them.

With American book auction catalogs, however, I am on much more solid ground. It would be safe to say that every major university and research library in this country had, at one time, as good a collection of American auction catalogs as I do. It would also be safe to say that today few if any of them have as good a collection as I do. The libraries received these "collections" a catalog at a time, as they were issued. They used them for the purposes for which they were intended—bidding on books—and then they threw them away.

Should we grieve for the libraries that threw away collections which they now feel are improperly hoarded in private hands, or should we salute the private collector for accumulating today's trash for tomorrow's Ph.D. thesis?

I cannot leave this issue without pointing out that the collector can frequently have a salutary effect on preservation that goes beyond what he is able to preserve himself. Despite the complaints of Sir Frederic Madden that Sir Thomas Phillipps collected "every scrap of written paper" in quantities and at prices that entitled him to "a place in Bedlam," the existence of a market helped to preserve

many manuscripts from destruction in shoe linings and bookbindings, even if they did not pass into the Phillipps collection. The best insurance for the preservation of an object is its value. Rarely has the acquisitions policy of an institutional library been responsible for the rise in value of a neglected category of books or ephemera.

On the subject of preservation, I feel that I must deal with another of the straw men I have created. Certainly books are more available to scholars through institutional ownership, but are they more likely to be preserved? Many scholars seem to view their examination of a rare book or a manuscript as the last that need occur. If the book is irreversibly damaged by their examination they can be consoled by the belief that their description of the object or their references to it will make the object's further existence unnecessary. Indeed, the elimination of the object itself may deter criticism that might result if another scholar should later examine the same book or manuscript.

Librarians are constantly torn between their obligation to make materials available for scholars and their desire to preserve materials for future generations. To what extent are collectors preserving bibliographic evidence that might otherwise be obliterated in libraries as buckram bindings are applied? A book in a fine original state is usually described as being in "collector's condition." What image is conjured up by "library condition?" A volume with the provenance of Hoe or Huth is enhanced in value. What is the value of a volume labeled "ex-library?"

Aside from promoting the physical preservation of books, the private book collector plays a significant role in the development of book collections. This may seem to be a tautology, but there is more to it than that. A mere accumulation of books is not a collection: that is, a group of books purposefully and thoughtfully brought together. A mere accumulation of books does not attract scholars, but a collection does.

Most of the great collections of books are in institutional libraries. The libraries themselves may have been responsible for a few of these. Scholars and faculty members, helping to formulate acquisition policies, may have been responsible for a few more. But the bulk of the institutional collections were developed by private collectors.

Some institutional libraries bear the names of the collectors who established them: Huntington, Folger, Morgan. Some private collections became significant portions of institutional libraries: the Lilly, Barrett, Bancroft, Clark, and Rosenwald collections, for example. Many more are smaller collections often recognizable now only by a gift bookplate or, if purchased, not recognizable at all.

In most institutions it is the gift or purchase of a private collection that has shaped subsequent acquisition policy, sometimes supported by endowments that accompany the collections.

The Library of Congress has the largest collection in this country of incunabula—those books printed from the invention of printing up to the year 1500. This massive resource was not the product of the astute policy of a succession of Librarians of Congress. The collection can be attributed to the deposit of the John Boyd Thacher collection in the early part of this century, followed by the purchase of the Vollbehr collection in 1930 and, most recently, the gift of the invaluable Lessing J. Rosenwald collection. The importance of these private collections is illustrated by the only two books on permanent display in the Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building: the perfect vellum copy of the Gutenberg Bible, from the Vollbehr purchase, and the manuscript Great Bible of Mainz, a gift of Lessing J. Rosenwald.

In my own field of Baskerville there are perhaps five significant institutional collections. Two of these are in Birmingham, as might be hoped. The collection at the Birmingham Reference Library is distinguished primarily

for the materials collected by the nineteenth-century Birmingham antiquary Samuel Timmins. The collection at Birmingham University is largely the gift of J. W. Hely-Hutchinson in 1954. The collection at the British Library is, so far as I know, not the product of any private collector but simply part of the unmatchable holdings of eighteenth-century English material there. The collections at the various libraries and the University Press at Cambridge stem partly from contemporary accumulation but were richly supplemented by the Rothschild collection and the handsome gift of the punches for Baskerville's type from the Deberny et Peignot type foundry. In this country there is only the Yale collection, which came almost entirely from Perry Williams Harvey in 1936.

Of these five institutional collections, three are wholly or largely from private collections, one is partly so, and only the British Library's is apparently the product of the library itself. That this last collection does not represent the result of an effort to acquire Baskervilles is evident from the fact that in 1959, when Philip Gaskell completed his bibliography of Baskerville, the British Library lacked the 1760 edition of Milton and the forgery of the 1757 Virgil. Both of these could readily have been obtained if Baskerville had been the collecting interest.

In preservation of books and in collection development the private collector has every right to be proud of his achievements. In the area of scholarly use of his materials the private collector has been much maligned. Although he may not stand quite so tall in this area as in others, the criticism in this regard is largely unwarranted.

Most collectors, I think, recognize a responsibility to scholarship. All of us are the beneficiaries of the scholarship that produces the bibliographies, biographies, and histories that are as much intended for our consumption as for that of fellow scholars. At the same time, few collectors are likely to respond to imperious demands from scholars

that they make manuscripts and unique printed materials available to them as if that were the collector's obligation to the world of letters.

Not only are collectors concerned about the safety of their precious possessions—concerns which are rarely addressed in the requests—but they are often asked to ship the materials to the scholar since he is much too busy or underfinanced to see them in the collector's library. I once shipped an inconsequential, but apparently scarce pamphlet to a scholar who retained it for two years and only returned it after being asked to do so. Furthermore, collectors are well aware of the market value of their possessions, and they know that the publication or Xerox copying of a significant unpublished manuscript source can seriously erode its value.

If approached with reasonable grace and concern for the books and manuscripts they value, however, book collectors are usually quite cooperative. They are as anxious to draw on the scholar's background as the scholar is to draw on the collector's resources.

My own experience in working with the Mark Twain Papers of the Bancroft Library has been both pleasant and rewarding. The Mark Twain Papers is the respository of the manuscripts, diaries, and letters of the Samuel Clemens estate and is currently responsible for publishing not only the critical texts of Mark Twain's published works but also the letters and unpublished manuscripts.

My Hinman Collator has served as a primary tool for this project, both for its original purpose of comparing several copies of the various editions of Mark Twain's books and for the checking of proofs.

In an early volume of the Mark Twain Papers, after endlessly rechecked proofs had finally been approved for printing, a printer in some far-off spot (where printers always are these days) dropped a few lines of type on the pressroom floor and replaced them on the wrong page.

The volumes were printed and bound long before the problem was noticed. Now, after a volume is printed and before it is bound, the sheets are checked against final page proofs on the Hinman Collator to spot any such error before it becomes irreversible.

It also developed that my collection of American auction catalogs was of crucial significance to the Mark Twain project. After learning about some of the work that was being done, I began to look for Mark Twain letters while reading my catalogs to search for Baskervilles. Several months later I turned a few hundred such references over to the Mark Twain Papers. They found that a substantial percentage of these represented otherwise unknown letters and decided to go through my entire collection, an accumulation of about twenty thousand auction catalogs and perhaps ten thousand book dealers' catalogs.

Of course there are other libraries where such a catalog search could have been undertaken, the best probably being the American Antiquarian Society. But my home, three or four miles from the Berkeley campus, is much more convenient and probably more comfortable.

Since such cooperation is supposed to be mutually beneficial, what did I gain from the project? The principal benefit to me has been the satisfaction of knowing that my collection has a real value. Even though collectors claim to collect for their own satisfaction, we say this largely because there is so little satisfaction in any other quarter. There is almost no pleasure in showing a collection to a fellow collector. The only books that really interest him are those he thinks should be in *his* collection rather than *yours*. It is easier to show a collection to a noncollector, who can be impressed with a room full of books and such standard showpieces as a fore-edge painting, a chained binding, or a fifteenth-century book.

But this satisfaction is only a part of the benefit. I must mention my feeling of involvement in a significant project.

I cannot forget that the Mark Twain Papers added a scarce catalog, which they had in duplicate, to my collection. And I would be remiss if I failed to express my gratitude to the member of the bibliographical team whose responsibility it was to pet our dog Butch.

In reviewing the benefits to scholarship of private collecting, I feel the great pity is that so few collectors publish the knowledge they accumulate in their years of study. Collectors are not scholars, and they often feel, acutely, their inadequacy in dealing with scholarly subjects. I have often wondered if it is the *lack* of that feeling of inadequacy that marks the scholar.

Some of the private book collector's knowledge is not lost, however, even if it does not appear in the form of a monograph. The collection itself can convey this knowledge simply by what is there and what is not. Ideally the collector's justification for including each volume and a summary of what he has learned about it would appear in a private library catalog, but a well-prepared sale catalog may also convey the message.

Where a collection or a unified part of it passes directly into an institution, I would like to suggest the value of maintaining the integrity of the collection. That does not mean that the collection must be kept as a unit. This is impractical for all but the most significant collections. But listings of these collecting units can certainly be maintained. Decisions on whether to place items in the stacks or retain them in special collections can take the integrity of a collection into account as can decisions on the disposition of duplicates.

The collection itself is the mirror of the collector, and although this image may be much less important to the institutional library than the books themselves, it is not so unimportant as to be disregarded and irretrievably lost.

The private book collector of today is a resource that cannot be ignored and needs to be encouraged. I would

not go so far as did Seymour de Ricci, in closing his famous Sandars lecture on English book collectors, "in England, to be a book collector has almost always meant—to be a patriot." But a book collector is a precious and all-too-scarce element in the effort to preserve and stimulate an interest in books, and I am pleased that the Center for the Book has made it possible for me to deliver that message.

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Designed by Kathleen Owens.